Practitioner's Docket No. 1182a   *PATENT*

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re prior application of: Noel Ray Marchbanks; Webster S. Coffman; Kenneth M. Sager; LeAnn R. Light; Luis A. Roman; Jonathan D. Macha

Application No.: Applied for   Group No.: unknown
Filed: herewith   Examiner:
For: CONSOLIDATED BILLING SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR USE IN TELEPHONY NETWORKS

Box Patent Application
Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D. C.   20231

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Please enter this preliminary amendment with the enclosed continuation application request filed herewith.

In the Specification

On page 1, line 5, please insert the following:

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RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of prior application serial number 09/154,962 filed September 17, 1998, entitled "CONSOLIDATED BILLING SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR USE IN TELEPHONY NETWORKS."--

In the Claims

On page 20 delete lines 5 through 30, on pages 21 through 25 delete lines 1 through 32 and on page 26, delete lines 1 through 20, and insert the following new claims:

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1. A method of billing, the method comprising:

in a billing system for a communication network, generating account information related to provisioning a communication service from a third party network for a customer;

receiving network information from the communication network into the billing system;

in the billing system, processing the network information to determine network charges related to usage of the communication network by the customer;

receiving third party information from the third party network into the billing system;

in the billing system, processing the third party information to identify the account information and determine third party charges related to usage of the third party network by the customer;

in the billing system, calculating a single invoice for the customer that includes the network charges and third party charges; and

in the billing system, generating the single invoice.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the account information is an account record for the communication service.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the network charge is an equipment charge.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein calculating the single invoice is based on a customer profile and further comprises identifying the customer profile for the customer.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein calculating the single invoice further comprises calculating a discount.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein calculating the single invoice comprises calculating taxes.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein calculating the single invoice comprises verifying the calculation of the single invoice.

8. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

    generating and transmitting an order record to the third party network; and

    receiving and processing a response to the order record from the third party network.

9. A billing system for a communication network comprising:

    a call processing system connected to the communication network and a third party network and configured to generate account information related to provisioning a communication service from the third party network for a customer, receive network information from the communication network, process the network information to determine network charges related to usage of the communication network by the customer, receive third party information from the third party network, and process the third party information to identify the account information and determine third party charges related to usage of the third party network by the customer; and

    an invoice system connected to the call processing system and configured to calculate a single invoice for the customer that includes the network charges and third party charges and generate the single invoice.

10. The billing system of claim 9 wherein the account information is an account record for the communication service.

11. The billing system of claim 9 wherein the network charge is an equipment charge.

12. The billing system of claim 9 wherein the invoice system is configured to calculate the single invoice based on a customer profile and identify the customer profile for the customer.
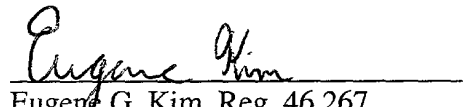
13. The billing system of claim 9 wherein the invoice system is configured to calculate a discount.

14. The billing system of claim 9 wherein the invoice system is configured to calculate taxes.

15. The billing system of claim 9 wherein the invoice system is configured to verify the calculation of the single invoice.

16. The billing system of claim 9 wherein the call processing system is configured to generate and transmit an order record to the third party network and receive and process a response to the order record from the third party network..--

Respectfully submitted,

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